

INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE EMBERA BEDEA COMMUNITY

**INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION TO EMBERA BEDEA  
STUDENTS OF FIRST GRADE IN BELALCÁZAR, CALDAS: A  
CURRICULUM ANALYSIS**

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**LICENCIATURA EN BILINGÜISMO CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS**

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**Trabajo de grado como requisito para optar por el título de Licenciados en  
Bilingüismo con Énfasis en Inglés**

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### **Abstract**

This research project focuses on analyzing the curriculum for the students of first grade of the Embera Bedea community in Belalcázar, Caldas. The analysis was conducted by using the document analysis, interviews, and class observations to condense the information that let the researchers to identify the didactics approaches, the learning considerations according to the educational national policies, and the characteristics of the Embera territory. The findings highlight the institutional tensions for the role of L1 and L2 in the curriculum, the conception based on the structural dimension, and the focus of interculturality that is considered on the institutional documents (PEI-Syllabi).

## **Resumen**

Este proyecto de investigación se enfoca en analizar el currículo para los estudiantes de grado primero de la comunidad embera bedea de Belalcázar, Caldas. El análisis se llevó a cabo a través de la recolección de documentos, de entrevistas y observaciones de clases para condensar la información que les permitió a los investigadores identificar los enfoques didácticos, las consideraciones en torno al aprendizaje de acuerdo con las políticas educativas nacionales y las características del territorio embera. Los hallazgos muestran las tensiones institucionales por el rol de L1 y L2 en el currículo, la concepción de bilingüismo basada en su dimension estructural y el enfoque de interculturalidad que esté contemplado en los documentos institucionales (PEI-planes de área).

## INTRODUCTION

The ethno-education -which is the term used in Colombia referring to the educational and pedagogical process oriented to those ethnic populations- and the curriculum for ethnic groups, in Colombia, have been a theme relegated and distant from its achievement as Bedoya, Granada, and Zuluaga (1999), and Castillo (2008) highlight in their respective studies. The current neoliberal governments have not pondered the importance of recognizing the diversity of Latin America from the Intercultural Bilingual Education along with the critical curriculum that responds to the contexts in which these curricula are accomplished (López, and Küper, 1999).

Nowadays, the educational system tends to homogenize the school standardizing the curriculum for all of the institutions, and many institutions in charge of indigenous communities apply this standardized curriculum ignoring the historical, social, economic and political situations of the communities.

This research project makes a curriculum analysis in first grade in the *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* wondering for the roles of L1 and L2, the sense of interculturality from the bilingual curriculum, and the relation of the national policies and the Intercultural Bilingual Education with the curriculum proposed by the educational institution in which we worked the research.



The conclusions of this research project demonstrate that the institution proposes a curriculum that responds to the national standardizations; however, in the teaching environment this curriculum does not comprehend and respond to the approach of Intercultural Bilingual Education (ethnoeducation), and it is not on the vanguard of the current Educational policies.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the proposals for indigenous bilingual education in Colombia are centered on a western school model, in which there is not a pedagogical appropriation of interculturality. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that indigenous language and culture are assimilated, so their educational projects could be enclosed into a subtractive bilingual education framework.

In Colombia, studies on ethnoeducation have antecedents since 1973 when bilingual education programs were first developed with some indigenous communities, and these programs extended to other ethnic groups in the '80s. Furthermore, in 1982, the document *Lineamientos Generales de Educación Indígena* is published as a response to the emerging need for indigenous education. By the end of this decade, MEN attains programs of indigenous teacher training. Finally, the '90s began with the new National Political Constitution that recognizes and protects ethnic and cultural diversity of Colombia (Art. 7). Likewise, languages and dialects spoken in Colombia by ethnic groups are considered official languages in their territories so that the instruction in the communities, where the vernacular languages are spoken, will be framed into a bilingual education process (Colombian Const. Art. 1).

Despite the political support, statistics demonstrate that the reality differs from those current educational policies. *Save the Children* conducted a study in 2016, and

they found that 86 % of the Colombian ethnic groups do not have educational projects that take into account their culture, their context, and their worldview.

Moreover, 30.1 % of Colombian indigenous population do not have basic education, and 32.14% do not read and write in their dominant language (Spanish) according to the census of 2005. Based on the statistics of MEN, *Save the Children* ratifies that the current state of indigenous education relies on the lack of pertinence in terms of flexibility of the educational system.

This lack of pertinence also relies on the curriculum orientations that respond to the pedagogical ideologies of the western school so that students do not expose to their own culture and worldview. Therefore, López and Küper (1999) propose a curriculum model for indigenous communities that is represented by a triad. This triad includes the values, the knowledge, and the consciousness of both western culture and ancestral culture in a dialogical relation that allows the intercultural dimension.

In Colombia, there are around 44 years of experience in ethnoeducation since 1973 when the first bilingual education programs were promoted among the indigenous, and the *Ley General de Educación* (ley 115 de 1994) established a bilingual education for the ethnic groups with linguistic tradition, referring to mother tongue (Art. 57). Nonetheless, the current educational conjuncture demonstrates that the progress in indigenous education is not coherent to all the baggage exposed before.

In an evaluative research study, Ito (2012) found that bilingual education (BE) in Paraguay, where Spanish is spoken as the prestigious language and Guaraní is used as the vernacular language, did not accomplish its purposes due to the diglossic use of the languages, the lack of teacher training, and the application and implementation of national policies regarding BE.

Viveros-Márquez, and Moreno-Olivos (2014) and Viveros-Márquez (2016), in their studies, drew as relevant conclusions the fact that in Mexico, (1) the intercultural bilingual education (henceforth IBE) is reduced to an incipient use of the vernacular language; (2) the teachers' misconceptions towards IBE is the cause of its failure, and (3) the hegemonies in charge of policy making affect the implementation of IBE proposals.

Promigas Foundation (2010) also led a research study to evaluate the achievements of the implementation of an IBE project in three educational centers and one educational institution in the Wayuu community of Colombia. Although the impact of the project was relevant, the researchers identified some aspects that needed to be considered to enhance their educational processes in terms of bilingualism and interculturality: (1) Teachers training in writing skills in the vernacular language, (2) the functional use of the indigenous language in the classroom, and (3) the design of a balanced curriculum in terms of L1 and L2 cultures.

This gap in IBE affects the Embera Bedea community in these aspects that a Kogui, educator of one of the three indigenous communities of *Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta*, referred to in an interview:

*Si un niño se prepara solo en su conocimiento propio como indígena va a tener mucha falencia en el momento de comunicarse con el mundo externo. E igualmente si solo aprende conocimientos occidentales pues no va a tener habilidad para comunicarse con la misma gente de su pueblo* (El Tiempo, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017)<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the Embera Bedea community needs to orient their pedagogical and didactical processes to a curriculum that contemplates the triad proposed by López and Küper (1999).

Bedoya, Granada, and Zuluaga (1999) alerted that if indigenous education does not reinforce the ethnic identity and cultural values, the educational conflict will continue with the confrontations between the national authorities and the educators. As consequence, it will be pertinent to work on a curriculum that has a dialogical relation between the western culture and the target Embera Bedea culture integrating the triad previously mentioned: Values, knowledge, and consciousness (López and Küper, 1999).

Taking into account that the mother tongue is crucial for the cognitive, and sociocultural development of children, it demands to build a bilingual curriculum that provides an appropriate level of relevance to the vernacular language in relation to the

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: If a child grows with knowledge restrictions of being only an indigenous, she/she is going to have many difficulties when communicating with the outside world. Also, if the child only learns about western knowledge, then, she/he will not be able to communicate with the same people of her/his community.

dominant language. Also, the implementation of a pedagogical and didactical approach that aims at developing first grade children competences in their vernacular language is needed since it has positive consequences on the development of language competences such as: Writing and reading comprehension (Mondiano 1974; Steward 1983; & Rockwell 1988 cited by López, 1997). For this reason, teacher training gains strength since teachers must constantly prepare to deal with cultural and cognitive issues to maintain an intercultural awareness in their educational praxis regarding the adaptation of materials and contents in the curriculum planning at schools.

Indigenous education, specifically IBE, does not have the impact that is expected. The lack of accomplishment of the requirements for IBE is the result of the following factors that affect its success:

- A. Indigenous education is focused on western school.
- B. There is not achievement of educational policies for indigenous communities.
- C. Indigenous bilingual education proposals are mostly subtractive.
- D. The pedagogical interrelation between the culture of L1 and L2 are not evident.
- E. The curriculum proposed by the National Ministry of Education (MEN) is not contextualized for the indigenous educational institutions.
- F. The curriculum is not aligned to the territory in which the educational praxis takes place, due to the lack of teachers' training.

Consequently, this research project attempts to identify the curriculum orientations adopted by the school. Based on the analysis, it could be possible to posit some pedagogical implications according to the state of IBE in first grade at the *Institución Educativa El Yarumal*. Therefore, it aims to encourage educational researchers to continue to investigate in this field in order to contribute to the academic community in the study of education for ethnic groups so that this could impact on the scenarios in which teachers acquire their knowledge and competences to become professionals. This impact should be evidenced even in those programs that do not focus on ethno-education such as in mathematics teaching programs, for example.

## **2. 1 Research questions**

What are the roles of L1 and L2 in the curriculum of first grade in the *Institución Educativa El Yarumal*?

What is the role of bilingualism to develop the sense of interculturality at *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* for first graders?

What are the relations of the curriculum proposed by the *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* for the Embera Bedea students of first grade regarding the national educational policies and the Intercultural Bilingual Education approach?



## **2.2 Objectives**

### **2.2.1 General objective**

To analyze the curriculum orientations and the components regarding Intercultural Bilingual Education of first graders in the Embera Bedea community of cabildo *El Totumal* in Belalcázar, Caldas.

### **2.2.2 Specific objectives**

To identify the roles of L1 and L2 in the curriculum for first grade at the Institución *Educativa El Yarumal*.

To determine the role of bilingualism in the development of the sense of interculturality at *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* in first grade.

To review the curriculum for first grade proposed by *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* and its relation to the national policies regarding the Embera language and culture.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Literature review**

This section focuses on presenting four research studies developed in Latin America, where the concept of Intercultural Bilingual Education concept emerges. The educational experiences taken as research problems go from the Center of America (Mexico) to the South of the continent (Colombia and Paraguay). The studies presented by Ito (2012), Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014), Viveros-Márquez (2016), and Promigas (2010) are of our academic interest for this research since they approach to the relations between the society, culture, and language.

Ito (2012) conducted a research study on the subject of bilingual education (Henceforth BE) by analyzing the sociolinguistic dimension of BE in the Paraguayan context, where both Guaraní and Spanish are the official languages according to the political constitution of 1992. Therefore, the objective of his research was to examine why Paraguayan Bilingual Education struggles in the country.

As a consequence, he designed an interview in order to find answers to questions regarding to (1) the language that is promoted by parents at home, (2) their perceptions of change in the classes since Guaraní's officialization in 1992 and the

implementation of BE since 1994, (3) the best ways of learning Spanish in rural areas, and (4) their opinion of “pure” Guaraní and Jopará, which are the vernacular languages spoken there. As the study seeks to provide a wide spectrum of the BE in Paraguay and its sociolinguistic dimension, the target population for this research was diverse as long as the participants play different roles in the educational context. The interviewees were 16 teachers, 16 parents, 3 intellectuals, and 4 policy makers.

The answers provided by the target population show that at the social level, Spanish is the dominant language due to the fact that all documents are written in Spanish. Besides, Spanish is used as the language of formal interaction, and this makes it a language of high variety. On the contrary, as Guaraní language does not have a writing system, it is conceived as language spoken in informal domains. This encourages both the researcher and the scholars to identify a diglossic situation in Paraguay that privileges Spanish as dominant code, whereas the Guaraní is thought to be a language of daily communication.

Additionally, it is stated by some interviewees that although there is a vast policy concerning BE, the reality differs from the educational policies because the proposals have not been put into the practice. Nonetheless, a parent presented a perception that is not similar to the previous one since from his experience, he affirmed that he entered to the school, he could not speak Guaraní, and he recognized that as an accomplishment: the fact that the students can currently speak in their L1 in the classroom. On the other hand, some participants consider that all they have

advanced in terms of BE is superficial due to the fact that it does not go beyond the proposals.

The study identified the lack of teachers training regarding BE, and some scholars and policy makers concern with the fact that some teachers do not speak Spanish well, and that is necessary when teaching Spanish in rural areas. Also, it is crucial to train teachers for BE if their desire is actually to teach bilingually. Finally, the researcher concluded by suggesting a proper training of bilingual teachers in order to break the current paradigm in the BE.

The same as Ito (2012), Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) presented another perspective of BE in Mexico; their research is enclosed into an evaluative study. While Ito (2012) analyze the problem from sociolinguistic point of view, Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) explored it from an anthropological angle. Nonetheless, both of them thought the vernacular language and its relevance for the educational system.

The participants of this study case were the indigenous primary school of Valentín Gómez Farías ubicada in La Colonia 1° de Enero de 1994 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, and the indigenous primary school of Lic. Benito Juárez García ubicada in the community San Miguel La Labor in San Felipe del Progreso. The study case is an evaluative research of qualitative, descriptive-explicative type; moreover, its data collection methods based on semi-structured interviews (managers and supervisors of each indigenous region), participant observation (class session), and focus group

(teachers and parents). These procedures had an ethnographic focus of the primary schools.

The findings show that, even though Mexico has hardly worked on IBE, it is reduced to a minimal use and translation of the vernacular language. Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) found that it needs to be promoted the pedagogical, linguistic, political and didactical conditions to avoid teacher's misperception of an intercultural bilingual approach, problem that can be solved with an educational project. Also, they prevent that intercultural education will not succeed unless its curriculum becomes autonomous and contextualized, which is failing nowadays in Mexico. Besides, it is pertinent to highlight the researchers' conclusion of the need schools have to become aware of an intercultural curriculum in which both west and indigenous world converge to build the intercultural education.

From this, it can be drawn that when implementing the intercultural bilingual curriculum in primary school, it is needed to find certified bilingual teachers; moreover, they will constantly need teacher training to ameliorate the teaching of the content established in the curriculum. Also, it must be considered an intercultural curriculum in which indigenous knowledge makes visible and valuable in the content; as a result, there will be a contextualized and autonomous curriculum.

Later, Vivero-Márquez (2016) presented a case study that was developed in the Mexican context in Los Altos, Chiapas. The research attempts to evaluate the intercultural bilingual education approach in the primary education in *Los Alto* and to

contribute in the understanding of the same problem in the indigenous education in Mexico.

The population of this study come from *La Colonia Primero de Enero de 1994*. The participants who are mainly teachers and students are identified in ethnic groups such as the Tzeltal and Tzotzil indigenous communities. The data collection methods were the evaluative method known as CIPP (context, input [*insumos*], process, and products) that consists on evaluating the context, the input [*insumos*], the process, and the products. In the interviews 70 parents participated. Moreover, observations of classes were conducted in the group of sixth grade, and 40 students answered a questionnaire designed by the researchers.

The findings demonstrate that 90 % of the students are native indigenous, and 55 % are bilingual even some of them speak three languages. However, the minority language is avoided in the school due to its lack of social prestige and the teachers' tendency to use more Spanish in the classroom. Although there are twelve teachers of whom six are bilingual, four trilingual, and one monolingual, all of them do not speak the same indigenous language. Therefore, considering that the students and teacher who are bilingual do not speak the same languages, the implementation of an IBE is a challenge for the school. In spite of the fact that there are dictionaries and books in the vernacular languages, the material does not recognize the linguistic varieties and they are not pedagogically and didactically adapted to promote interculturality.

Vivero-Márquez (2016) concluded by asseverating that the school's achievements are not close to an IBE approach as long as the teachers lack training in

bilingual education. Additionally, teacher's educational praxis is affected by the government that oversee and control the education in Mexico since it does not consider different curriculum standards to the ones that are followed by the rest of the Mexican schools.

Analyzing a national perspective of IBE in Colombia, the current research focuses on Wayuu indigenous communities, who were the first to receive a formal education since the 1970s. The study by Promigas (2010) aims at enhancing the pertinence and quality of primary education, strengthening the IBE into three educational centers and an educational institution of indigenous presence in a long term.

Furthermore, the project advocates to reinforce the right of cultural and linguistic diversity as well as Wayuus' intercultural educational projects. The target community where the study was accomplished is located in Manaure, recognized as the Salt Capital, La Guajira. The population is integrated by indigenous students from three ethno-educational centers (La Gloria, Nuestra Señora de Fátima and Maracarí) and the Educational Institution Eusebio Septimo Mari in the north and south of Manaure, respectively. This is a qualitative research, and its data collection methods are class observations (with feedback), lesson plan analysis, and analysis of students' products.

In the findings exposed in the research, it was important to train teachers in their writing skills although the language has already a written system. Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) and Promigas (2010) converge in the sense that

the vernacular language becomes more an instrument in the classroom, and the intercultural educational purpose is ignored. On the other side, it has been found that Wuayuunaiki language might be proposed, now and in their case, as a second language in learning process. Fortunately, five textbooks were created in order to teach and maintain the teaching of Wayuunaiki throughout all the elementary school.

Teacher training has been improved to the point that it does not concern only theorizing the intercultural teaching, but also understanding how to transpose didactics without depending on a book. Another result is that the Wayuu Culture subject was created with the intention to revitalize their own knowledge and values, so it let them realize that these educational institution and centers were focused on the western education ideologies rather than an intercultural contextualized education.

This research study goes beyond establishing the content of the curriculum and promotes the designing of physical material to be implemented in the classes; it needs to emerge from the culture in which the indigenous students are immersed. Promigas (2010) complements Viveros-Márquez & Moreno-Olivos (2014) initiative of teacher training, involving not only the theory of interculturality, but also encouraging teachers to develop didactics in the content to be implemented. To conclude, Promigas (2010) built their own subject to work on the revitalization of culture and language, showing relevant results. It can be inferred from the research that, in order to have more impact in further projects it is accurate to do it separately from other subjects.



To wrap up, Ito (2012), Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014), Viveros-Márquez (2016), and Promigas (2010) highlight the necessity of training teachers to achieve a real IBE. They also suggest the teacher must develop communicative competences in the vernacular languages for the success of this educational approach. Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014), and Viveros-Márquez (2016) stated that IBE does not transcend from its theoretical to its practical dimension due to the fact that the achievements have been incipient to what all this implies, whereas Ito (2012) states a social resignification of the use of Guaraní in formal domains to enhance their BE. All these studies demonstrate that IBE cannot be possible without hard work in spite of existing a vast educational policy in the whole continent that is not evidenced in the real educational praxis.

### **3.2 Conceptual framework**

#### **3.2.1 Mother tongue and target language: communications and thinking systems**

The notion of bilingualism and Intercultural Bilingual Education implies the relation of two linguistic codes, so the concepts of mother tongue (L1) and target language (L2/FL) are indispensable to understand the social, cultural and political conditions of bilingual speech communities.

##### **3.2.1.1 Mother tongue**

Mother tongue or L1 is defined by the *Centro Instituto Cervantes* as the language that a person learns at first. The concept of mother tongue reveals the social phenomenon in which, generally, mothers are in charge of transmitting orally the

language at home, as it is the case of many indigenous communities. Moreover, the L1 is also the first instrument for thinking, and provides a comfortability to understand and express the worldview of the subjects. Nonetheless, another language can replace this role in case the subject learns another language and the one learned at first is relegated.

### **3.2.1.2 Target language**

*Centro Virtual Cervantes* defines the target language as the linguistic communication system that is acquired or learned after the mother tongue: this language could be learned in or out of the context. Depending on the circumstances, the target language is defined as foreign language (FL), which means that the language that is being learned is not spoken in the speaker's territory, whereas the second language (L2) is learned/acquired in the context where the language is used. For example, the indigenous communities of Latin America that speaks their native languages as mother tongue speaks Spanish as second language due to the fact that is the official language in most of the continent, and English at schools is conceived as the foreign language since it is not spoken as official language in the national territories.

### **3.2.2 Intercultural Bilingual Education**

The following lines provide a theoretical construction of Intercultural Bilingual Education as a sociocultural praxis, whose priorities are (1) bilingualism and (2) interculturality. For this reason, those two concepts are defined to approach to

the conceptualization of Bilingual Education (BE), Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), and their cognitive and sociocultural dimensions.

### **3.2.2.1 Defining bilingualism**

Bilingualism is a concept that has multiple and varied definitions, and it has been conceptualized from linguistic, psychological, cognitive, sociological and anthropological points of view. One of the first descriptions of the term was provided by Bloomfield (1933), who posited bilingualism as the *native-like control* of two languages. Weinreich (1953), however, broke the limitations of the concept, and drew a definition that considers the bilingual speaker as the one who is able to utter sentences in a second language. This redefinition takes into account that bilingual speakers switch between linguistic standards and sociolinguistic varieties that affect their communicative performance.

Baker (2001) distinguishes between two types of bilingualism that are known as bilingual ability and bilingual usage. While the bilingual ability refers to knowledge and capacity to communicate in two languages in which L2 is rarely used, the bilingual usage consists on speaking two languages for different purposes. Therefore, as Spolsky (1998) pointed out, the performance of a bilingual not always encourages to develop the two linguistic codes in a balanced way as proposed by Bloomfield (1933) since the languages are used depending on the domains and the contexts. Thus, it is possible to find bilinguals who only use L1 for conversational needs while other bilinguals write and read in L2 for academic purposes. As a consequence, bilingualism is not limited to an oral or written usage; on the contrary,

it could have multiple expressions that are evidenced in the human communication depending on the geographical location, the sociocultural contexts, and the speakers' domains.

### **3.2.2.1.1 Bilingualism: languages in contact, languages in conflict, and diglossia**

In sociolinguistics, the language is understood as the fusion of all the linguistic varieties of a speech community. Based on *Centro Virtual Cervantes*, the repertoires -as part of the linguistic varieties- are defined by the speaker's ability to adapt their speech according to the interlocutor, the social status, the context, and the domain (personal, public, academic, occupational). Spolsky (1998) refers to the notion of repertoires including the set of varieties that are manifested in the communication of bilingual speech communities, where the role of the languages has a function, so a bilingual speaker could speak in L1 at home because the function is family interaction. On the other hand, a speaker could use L2 when working or studying since the social function is formal communication. Those linguistic varieties in both monolingual speech community and bilingual speech community responds to the social configuration of the linguistic communication, which accepts some linguistic practices as valid depending on the contexts, and the domains.

When the territory is habited by two or more communities, and each one of them has a different language, a need of communication among these communities emerges, and these languages keep in contact becoming bilingual or multilingual grounded on Areiza, Cisneros, and Tabares (2004). They affirm that these phenomena occur for multiple circumstances such us: socio-economic, political, psychological,

educational factors, etc. Nevertheless, there is not a language that has been isolated without any contact with another. From that, it is pertinent to recognize that the contact of languages becomes a language conflict.

Spolsky (1998) recognizes these conflicts due to the fact that speakers produce tensions trying to adopt one language for the one with more prestige although it seems that users have no preferences and there is no conflict. These situations are created because of conscious actions like policies or factor that oblige to adopt another language to survive. For Areiza, Cisneros, and Tabares (2004), the fact of imposing a hegemonic language as official to a community whose users have another language for daily interactions creates a conflict between the vulgar language that becomes subordinated if the official language is required for formal actions such as: education, commerce, and institutional purposes.

When two varieties of a language or two languages are spoken with different social functions, diglossia emerges as phenomenon where the two varieties or languages in contact are in conflict for the role of the dominant variety (Spolsky, 1998; and *Centro Virtual Cervantes*). Diglossia could appear as phenomenon that manifests the social inequality since the national policies of territories assign different roles and functions to the languages, sometimes prioritizing the use of prestigious languages over the vernacular languages.

### **3.2.2.2 Interculturality**

In order to define interculturality, it is appropriate to highlight that it does not only concern indigenous (although the term first emerged from indigenous groups during the nineties) but also afro-descendants and migrants (Walsh, 2009). From the basis that culture has a plethora of meanings and symbols communicated throughout the time (Geertz, 1973). Morillas (2001), cited by Trujillo-Sáez (2002), establishes a symbiosis between culture and communication so that communication develops the scaffold for culture to become and transcend as culture; from that, Trujillo-Sáez (2002) founds culture as a “dynamic entity in a continuous process of transmission-modification” concreting that an “active participation in communication, geared by diversity awareness and critical attitude and practice” of two or more culture, allows interculturality.

UNESCO (2007) frames interculturality into a dynamic notion of culture, indicating an interaction of diverse cultures; additionally, it establishes that interculturality is a reciprocal respect and dialogue wherefrom expressions are shared between those cultures in contact. Trujillo-Sáez (2005) goes in depth and retakes the concept of interculturality going hand in hand with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). He describes interculturality in two ways, being static when it is just a recognition of two or three cultures in contact, but dynamic when there is ‘critical awareness’ on the communicative interaction in terms of pluriculturality (cognitive features and worldview) and multiculturality (social state like religion or ethnicity).

Hernández (2005) condenses interculturality as a phenomenon that can be analyzed along with three features: First, as a process that builds a rational model of the perception there is about the otherness and what the *alter ego* conceives about oneself. Second, as a philosophy that provides models to comprehend the reality; and third, as a program that allows the construction of (academic) content or activities of interest for the target cultures.

Having a critical and contemporary perception of interculturality, Walsh (2009) proposes to analyze it as its conjunctural use, from three points of view such as; (1) *the relational*, limiting interculturality to the interaction and interchanging of socio-cultural matters into a pluriethnic contexts, ignoring the economic, political, social, and not less important, epistemic structures of the minorities. (2) *The functional*, acknowledging cultural differences and diversity, but neutralizing them in the same social structure of the government; this time, the social and cultural inequalities are avoided, contributing to the current neoliberal patterns of the government. (3) *Critical interculturality*, a theoretical proposal that foment a political, epistemic, social, and ethic project that must emerge from the minorities to transform the social and institutional structures to reclaim “(...) *condiciones de ser, estar, pensar, conocer, aprender, sentir y vivir distintas* (Walsh, 2009, p.18)” changing the structures of power that maintain the discrimination, racialization and inequality.

### **3.2.2.3 Defining bilingual education: Social and cognitive dimensions**

Before providing a definition of what bilingual education is, it is necessary to define the concept of education. Grounded on Zambrano's (2002) definition, education is conceived as an axiological and practical activity since the individual is educated in the sense of rearing, teaching, and building, and this constitutes the axiological dimension of educating. On the other hand, its practical dimension is based on the idea that educating is to transmit the patterns of the culture. Therefore, as Benner (1995, 1996), cited by Runge and Muñoz (2012), pointed out, education is considered as a sociocultural practice (praxis) that is cemented by a society.

Similarly, BE as a taxonomy of education could be understood as a sociocultural praxis that according to Baker (2001), it is a phenomenon that emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, he considers that the modern existing notion of BE is dangerous due to the fact that bilingualism is inherent to societies around 5000 years ago as Mackey (1978) stated. BE must be linked to its historical background as long as it arose as a result of social and political processes such as the Civil Rights.

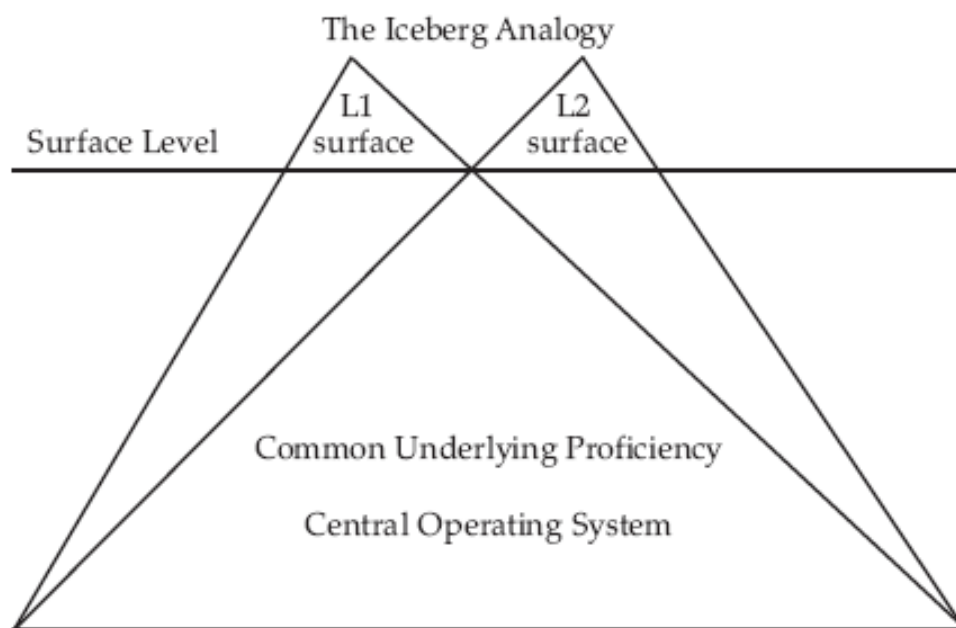
Even though BE and foreign/second language teaching seem to be closely related concepts, they differ from each other due to their pedagogical goals and uses of languages in the classroom. Following García (2009), BE attempts to educate in one type of bilingualism by interacting in both L1 and L2, whereas the foreign language teaching seeks to develop communicative competences in an additional language. In the cultural ideologies, while educating bilingually encourages to the interaction in the two cultures, learning an additional language aims to become familiar with the target language culture. The pedagogical emphasis for BE proposes



the integration of language and content. On the contrary, foreign language teaching focuses on an explicit language instruction. In the same line, Cummins (2008) defines BE as the process of instructing in two linguistic codes by integrating the language and the content. He, therefore, suggests that bilingual education promotes the teaching of subject matter content instead of teaching L2 as an independent subject. In that sense, while the main goal of foreign language teaching is the development of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), the BE aims at developing both BICS and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Cummins (1984) draws these distinctions about the development of the L2 in the interpersonal and academic domains.

The bilingual competence from a sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic points of view is understood as the ability to use the L1 and L2 depending on the domain in which the speaker is involved as stated by Spolsky (1998). Based on this, he questions the validity of becoming a balanced bilingual due to the fact that the L1 and L2 are used in response to the communicative demands of the contexts where the languages are spoken.

Regarding the concept of bilingual competence, Cummins (1986) presented the *dual iceberg* to explain how the L1 and L2 develops an interdependence. At the cognitive level, the linguistic interdependence proposes that the languages are not separately used as long as there is a constant exchanging of the knowledge that is acquired in both languages.



**Figure 1:** CUP 'Dual Iceberg' Model of Bilingualism (Cummins, 1980<sup>a</sup>, p. 87).

#### 3.2.2.4 Conceptualizing Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE)

Vivero-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) propose the relevance of conceiving, first, the cultural pluralism, and from that, the recognition of the worldview of the target culture in which education takes place. In that sense, diversity in terms of linguistic, epistemic and axiological reality must be firstly recognized before conceiving and defining an educational model.

Cariman (2015) describes IBE as an educational model that aims to maintain the coexistence of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity while migrants, and ethnic groups build their individual and national identities. He, then, acknowledges migrants from the same geographical space, outsiders, and indigenous as part of an IBE and, in all the cases, with the right to coexist in the educational system.

Regarding IBE in Latin America, López and Küper (1999) frame two-dimensional standpoints implying its pedagogical labor for indigenous: the first one evokes a development of strategies and attitudes to be applied while gathering social differences related to cultural or linguistic matters. For the second, he distinguishes a new worldview as a product that can enrich multilingual and pluricultural societies in Latin America.

On the other hand, López and Küper (1999), cited by Vivero-Márquez (2016), go beyond and recognize that IBE needs to consider a triad composed by knowledge, values, and consciousness throughout a dialogue of both target cultures; having as a result an education that emerges from the aboriginal culture that interacts with the western education.

### **3.2.3 Ethno-curriculum: From the contexts to the critical perspective**

The relations between the educational praxis and the contexts are determinant for assuming a critical perspective in the curriculum proposal. In Latin America, where there is an abundant diversity, the recognition of the contexts allows to set learning scenarios. Thus, these following lines, attempts to draw a definition of critical curriculum for ethnic groups in our *América Mestiza*, as Ospina (2013a) named it.

### 3.2.3.1 Critical curriculum and its political dimension

Considering a political dimension in the critical curriculum means that the educational praxis, the one that is intentioned and institutionalized by the nation-states, conceives the students as agents, as political subjects who can transform their immediate contexts and realities. The curriculum, in this perspective, emerges as a project that goes beyond the conception that curriculum is limited to a list of contents to develop in a course. Londoño (2016) reflects on the critical curriculum based on two statements: (1) it includes the tendencies that question the economist and technocrat foci, and its vision as a means of power and reproduction of social inequalities; (2) it is open and flexible, and it adapts to the demands of the context.

The contents are also relevant for the curriculum in the critical perspective, but behind them, there are social contexts, pedagogical and didactical approaches, and epistemologies that are linked to ethical and political dimensions, which are present in all educational process (Londoño, 2016). Therefore, the relations between culture, society and territory become necessary since the curriculum is understood by Grundy (1998), and Grinberg and Levy (2009), cited by Londoño (2016), as a cultural construction that involves social processes linked to the selection, the distribution, and access to the culture.

Designing a curriculum is to define a type of human being that will be educated for a society: this intends to break the paradigm of the international education system that structures the curriculum by standards and competences,

sometimes, to get good results in standardized tests (Londoño, 2016). Rivera (2008) states that this critical paradigm assumes the knowledge as “social force” that emerges when the political framework in education is interiorized. Regarding this, the critical curriculum means to see beyond what the culture has instituted as correct and valid (Londoño, 1996).

Here is the point where the reflective practice takes place: a teacher that reflects on the educational praxis must make decisions regarding the curriculum orientations so that he/she builds bridges between the students and their multiple realities by seeking to interpret these situations where they are confronted (Rivera, 2008). This is also a confrontation with the culture that according to Quintar (2018) is seen as a pedagogical scenario and a political praxis, whose myths, rites, beliefs, and representations allow the emergence of political subjectivity. This emergency could not be possible if there is no a historical dimension, when the individual becomes aware of his/her history, the historical consciousness appears as the act of realizing, of recognizing the realities that can be interpreted thanks to the collective memories that intersects the individual memory to form psychological units of the subjectivity.

In that sense, the critical curriculum sees the student as political subjects who are emerging for the world, and the societies, but this political subject is also a historicized subject. Quintar (2018) affirms that the current educational policies are policies of forgetfulness, so the memory does not have a place at schools, so, increasingly, the subjects are less sensible to their history. These policies are homogenizers due to the fact that they aim at educating under the idea of ‘reason’ and

‘science’ with a western optics so that the schools do not focus on historical consciousness since this totalitarian capitalism needs workforce (Quintar, 2018).

When people appeal to their memories and the history, they take awareness of their identities, so the result could be the confrontation between citizens and institutions. The freedom of expression of the identities and subjectivities are the result of fighting to the system who oppresses the liberties. Quintar (2018) states that:

*Una de las condiciones de humanidad que consideramos fundantes cuando de sujetos y subjetividad se habla es: la memoria; y, por ende, la historia. Dos conceptos y/o categorías y dimensiones cargadas de sentidos y significados que nos conforman identitariamente; entendiendo que la identidad no es monolítica, sino que es dinámica, multifacética he historizable, pero que se alimenta de este núcleo magmático y vital como lo es la red significativa que nos acoge y nos sostiene. Y la historia, da cuenta de esa red significativa que es reinterpretada por el sujeto en su tiempo, espacio y devenir pero que lo constituye. Memoria e historia que, como acto imperial, es tomada por el propio sistema educativo para, las más de las veces, convertirla en política de olvido como historia oficial. Y vaya si no pueden dar cuenta de estos los diferentes. (p.235)*

Quintar (2018) posits the following questions, which can be the starting point when designing a curriculum in a critical perspective:

- 1) How to organize critical pedagogies and didactics that assume and recognize *the life* and *the diversity* as cultural keys?
- 2) How to generate alternatives of critical thinking and production of historical knowledge in countries where a diversity of indigenous worldviews, Afro-American worldviews, gypsy worldviews, and westernized worldviews converge in the same territories?

Quintar (2018) attempts to approach to critical pedagogy by taking position from a decolonial perspective to consider Latin America as political project, whose success depends on the quality of education that is offered in the different territories.

Therefore, the curriculum must start to recognize the ethnic diversity, the memory as an opportunity of decolonization, the school as place that allows the emergency of political subjectivity. The critical curriculum transcends the notion of ‘contents’ to articulate the knowledge with the increasing need of community development: as Rivera (2018) asserted critical pedagogy must transform the knowledge in ‘social force’.

### **3.2.3.2 Critical curriculum: flexibility and transversality**

In the critical curriculum, the knowledge, that traditionally has been understood as the list of contents, is conceived as ‘social force’, so the flexibility and the transversality are two other characteristics of it. Assuming the curriculum as a project of society implies that the disciplines and the *savoirs* must be interconnected so that all the knowledge acquired at school contribute to shape a subject with power

of transforming his/her immediate contexts, approaching, more and more, to an idea of progress that responds to the contextual necessities.

The curriculum flexibility, grounded on Escalona (2007), is the process of intercommunication with disciplines and educational actors in which it is possible to detect what is susceptible of changes. As the realities and the context are constantly changing, the educational praxis must be updated while the pedagogies and the curricula are built based on the type of human being that should be educated without underestimating the value of the contexts and realities that are emerging. In that sense, the flexibility allows that the learning goals, the competences, and the knowledge are not rigid. Londoño (2016) understands by curriculum flexibility the possibility to adequate to the conditions of the educational means.

A curriculum that is flexible allows transversality since the subjects must not be considered as delimited territories that other teachers must not cross. On the contrary, the transversality appears to enhance the teaching and learning process. Assuming the education of citizens as a social project means that the individual is exposed to set of practices that conceives the learning and formation as integral processes. Velásquez (2009) defines curriculum transversality as a point of intersection that shares learning moments that are common in two or more educational scenarios, so that coexistence must benefit the learners as long as they can have wide cognitive schemata regarding what they acquire at schools.

### **3.2.3.3 Praxis in the field of education**



Based on Aristotle, the praxis refers to the doing of the human being, which transforms the same human being; who at the same time executes a responsible, self-determined and ideas-based actions. The human being becomes human, because of its praxis, so this conception of praxis allows Aristotle to conceive education as the human praxis to be shared with those who need education. At the same time, into education is how the political, ethical and pedagogical action is inherent, and must be dealt with wisdom and reflective judgment (Runge, and Muñoz, 2012).

Runge & Muñoz (2012) retake Dietrich Benner's statements about the praxis into pedagogy, considering the following triad: thinking (theory foundations) action (human praxis) and reflection (reflecting on the history of the human praxis). This triad into an anthropological- pedagogical point of view, would move human beings to confront these basic problematics in life by doing (praxis) something with: (1) Human being coexistence with the nature (2) coexistence with other human beings, and (3) the human being condition (imperfection, necessity of care, fragility, and death).

### **3.2.3.4 Curriculum as praxis**

Grundy (1987), cited by Yek, and Penney (2006), starts by considering the 'curriculum as praxis' as an active procedure within the learning in which the planning of the contents (theory), the action (praxis), and the evaluation converge and interact in the whole process. Nonetheless, it is not only about the curriculum, but the new era of postmodernism. It is highlighted the fact that the postmodernism is a way

in which the human being understands the discourse and within it the knowledge subjectively, which also depends on the environment and the situation. That is why the teaching and learning process into the curriculum as praxis becomes a dual (Teacher - Learner) interaction in which both of them dialogue and negotiate. Yek and Penney (2006) takes Grundy's (1987) idea of connecting the curriculum with the critical pedagogy to propose that students and teachers have to take control over their knowledge and confront it to real problems; thinking and reflecting critically to go further with their capacities.

Condensing the previous conceptualizations, the curriculum as praxis involves sociocultural matters and demands an active reading of discourses that build knowledge from different human praxis. Following Benner's triad, the curriculum as praxis ponders the (theory) in its contents, which are taken to real situations outside the institution, executing actions (praxis) to confront and analyze critically those real scenarios with the theory. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the (evaluation) as a continuous pondering, reflection on the conjunctural happenings at a local, national and global level; but it must, specially, respond to the learners needs breaking with the relations of power and subordination that restrict the freedom under discourses of hierarchies. It looks for a plural interaction into the society in which everyone is subject of the learning process and becomes a political, historical and cultural subject in the societies.

### **3.2.3.5 Curriculum: Towards transformational leadership**

Habermas in his theories of Knowledge and human interests (1972) refers to the human being as a subject whose rationality allows to experiment pure and elevate pleasure. From this, the human being looks for the fundamental interests that supply this search of rationality. Habermas defines them as: the technical, the practical and the emancipatory interests (Habermas,cited by Grundy, 1998).

Grundy (1998) considers relevant Habermas statement of not relying on the technical and practical interests by themselves, because what is technical becomes an instrument (people as objects – curriculum by objectives) and what is practical can be manipulated by false realities (relations of power – curriculum by competences); these two do not make autonomous and responsible subjects as they do not reflect on themselves and there is no appreciation of the otherness. She retakes that the emancipatory interest aims at educating subjects that peruse freedom from a critical emancipatory position against the homogenization, instrumentation and institutionalization of the of the knowledge by institutions of power.

Emphasizing on the emancipatory interest, it needs to be historical-hermeneutic into the curricula in order to start the decolonization by making subjects that reflect on their ancestral backgrounds and colonization practices. She inquires for curricula whose students become historized subjects that understand and decodify the senses, identifications of the own culture, and then become political and historical subjects. It means that the curricula must be re-thought politically and epistemically at schools from the plurality of Latin America; disabling those cognitive, psυχical

and behavioral Western structures that dominate and taxonomize the continent (Quintar, 2018).

Quintar (2018) also advocates for a critical- hermeneutic process in the curricula that after having constructed a historical memory from which there is a new configuration of a plural episteme that responds to the necessities of the realities into the contexts of Latin America. In this way, she affirms, there will be, in fact, other ways of being, think, live... in this continent. All of this is a process that must be accomplished in the curricula as it was via education that we were colonized.

From these perspectives, a curriculum towards a transformational leadership comprises contents that, at a first level, reveals practices of colonization to stimulate its decolonization; at the time that the ancestral backgrounds are recognized and valued along with their traditions, philosophies, cultures, languages... decodifying and recuperating those senses and identifications. As a result, historized subjects are empowered historically and politically to leader new ways of social, cultural and epistemic transformations. Everything framed into the plurality that denotes Latin America.

A curriculum towards a transformational leadership, foment the historical memory. It is the bases for its students to destroy those colonizing forces and revendicate themselves, leading processes to coexist with the miscegenation, which is impregnated by the Western, but being independent of its instrumentalized, homogenized education. Moreover, it is a way of discovering an independent Latin

America that revives its ancestral history, knowledge, traditions, cultures, languages while emerge new citizenships.

### 3.2.3.6 Critical curriculum in ethnic groups

The Colombian writer, William Ospina, in his book *América Mestiza* draws a definition of America sketching some broad aspects, from which he argues the reasons to call it Mestiza:

*(...) se diría que de todos los nombres que ha buscado para sí, el que más podría convenirle es el de América Mestiza, que al menos procura definirla por su diversidad y por sus mixturas, no por la predominancia de alguno de sus elementos. Y habría que entender por mestiza no sólo la mezcla de elementos étnicos y culturales ibéricos e indígenas, sino la múltiple convergencia de elementos africanos, de las otras naciones de Europa y la creciente incorporación de tradiciones del resto del mundo. Nuestra América es menos una homogeneidad geográfica que una conjunción histórica y cultural, pero el destino común de sus habitantes terminó convirtiéndola en un mundo al que es preciso pensar y abarcar en conjunto. (...) (Ospina, 2013a, p.11).<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Translation: (...) It would be possible to say that all the names the continent has looked for itself, the most convenient is *América Mestiza*. At least that name defines it, considering its diversity and its mixtures, but not because of considering some of the predominant features. Also, it is relevant to understand by *Mestiza* not only the mixture of ethnic and cultural features that belong to the Iberians or the indigenous, but also the Africans, the European nations, and the increasing incorporation of the whole world traditions, that converge in the continent. Our *América Mestiza* is

It is necessary to understand America by its complexity and diversity before contextualizing the critical curriculum in ethnic groups since the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is conceived from the idea of glocality. This idea highlights the fact that the world is undoubtedly connected by the economies, the technological developments, and the international relations, so global realities affect in some way the realities of local contexts. Londoño (2016) ponders that curriculum in critical perspective should not be isolated of the glocality since the globality influences in the life of every human being while the local realities evidence the circumstances of the specific contexts: considering this is crucial for the education of individuals.

Ospina (2013a) recognizes two virtues of *América Mestiza*: its cultural and ethnic complexity. These two virtues constitute the bases of a critical curriculum that orients its pedagogical actions to set educational praxis scenarios that promotes the plurality in a glocal perspective. Therefore, the role of curriculum in ethnic groups is understood as a political proposal that questions the structures of power in which the knowledge is produced grounded on western parameters (Walsh, 2009). On the contrary, this type of curriculum seeks to deal with the difference, and its main purpose is to reduce the epistemic racism (Piñacué, 2014). Dealing with epistemic racism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must consider the glocality to establish a dialogical relation

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less a geographic homogenization than a historical and cultural conjunction, but the common fate of its habitants ended up making of *America Mestiza* a world that is accurate to be pondered and embraced altogether.

between the ancestral knowledge (locality) and the western knowledge (globality) as López & Küper (1999) proposed in their triad.

Based on the notion of epistemic racism and its structures of power, the curriculum in ethnic groups must start by questioning the relevance of memories when giving a place to the ancestral knowledge at schools (Quintar, 2018). In Latin America, especially in Colombia, in the education systems the memory does not have a relevant place, and this phenomenon is also evident in the cultural behaviors that tend to ignore the history. William Ospina states that:

*La historia empieza lejos, y no es posible entender muchas cosas de nuestra América sin mirar sus raíces a veces muy distantes en el espacio y en el tiempo. Hemos aprendido a vivir esta tierra como si de verdad sólo tuviera cinco siglos, y esa costumbre favorece el hecho mágico de que cada cierto tiempo nos asalte un vértigo de antigüedad.* (Ospina, 2013a, p.94).<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing that historical knowledge suggests recuperating not only historical events and facts but also the ancestral knowledge to consolidate a political project in which the ethnic communities can build new identifications from new epistemic perspectives that are consequent to the memories (Quintar, 2018). This self-understanding as historized subjects allows ethnic groups to develop a sense of

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<sup>3</sup> Translation: History begins far away, and it is not possible to understand many happenings of our América without looking at its bases, sometimes very distant throughout the space and time. We have learned to live this land as if it had only five centuries, and that custom leads to the magic fact that frequently we feel an antique unsteadiness.

consciousness of their own societies and cultures. In an interview with the Bolivian sociologist, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, she explains that in contemporary sociology, identity is not the result of a process in which the individuals set their subjectivity; on the contrary, the identity is the set of values and behaviors that a society determines when a person is born. Thus, she prefers to talk about identification since this concept evokes that capability of self-determination, so the individual builds his/her own subjectivity (Rivera, 2016).

The process of identification has close relation to the memories and the idea of historized subjects inasmuch as an individual who is able to understand her/his own past and present is a subject who is conscious of her/his place in the world that contributes to the transformation of the realities that he/she shares with the communities that belongs to (Quintar, 2018). If critical curriculum also seeks for developing transformational leadership in the subjects who are in an educational process, the role of identifications becomes relevant due to the fact that a community who can identify by itself is a community that has clear horizons.

Ospina (2013b) highlights the importance of identification processes for a democratic culture that prioritizes the collective interests over the individual interests, and the Colombian society is still in the path of constituting its democratic system, but it implies a hard work of identification, especially, in those groups whose political participation has been hidden, this is the case of ethnic-political movements.

Once all these structures of power related to the hegemonic knowledge get broken, and the ancestral knowledge has a preponderant place into the critical



curriculum, it can be autonomous enough to create their philosophical bases to ponder themselves under their particular conditions by making sense of their existences in relation to their life-worlds. Sánchez (2001) and Ospina (2013b) converge on this heideggerian idea that building historical senses encourages individuals to think about their cognoscitive world and their life-world by keeping that level of self-interpretation: this sense of their own existence allows them to co-exist with others. Therefore, this is the point where otherness emerges as need of mediating among worldviews.

### **3.2.4 Ethno-education: from communities to educational policies**

In the '60s, some organizations such as ANUC, ONIC, and CRIC emerged struggling for the recognition of their cultures, the empowerment of their communities as well as their autonomy. They started by thinking about their progress grounded on Bonfil Batalla's statements regarding the idea of ethno-development (*etnodesarrollo*). This encouraged these organizations to consider their own educational processes in relation with their cultural practices, and their linguistic traditions. In Colombia, this emerging need is denominated ethnoeducation, whose emphasis was on bilingualism. In the '80s ethnoeducation continued to gain force until the Ministry of Education took position by publishing *Lineamientos Generales de Educación Indígena* in 1982. In 1985, MEN founded the office of ethnoeducation to take actions in the aspects concerning teachers' training and curriculum for ethnic schools.

The '90s began with the new Political Constitution that recognizes in the article 7 the need of protecting the ethnic and cultural diversity in Colombia, which is connected to the article 27 that guarantees the academic freedom: this means that if they have a different culture, they have right to teaching and learning based on their worldviews and philosophies. In this sense, the article 68 ratifies the right parents have to choose the type of education for their children so that none educational institution is able to educate children in a specific religion. This due to the movements of the '70s and '80s that seek for the separation of the teaching and religion. Therefore, in the article 70, the state is responsible of promoting the different cultures in equal conditions. Finally, the article 85 establishes the fundamental rights of the Magna Carta as rights of immediate application, and its incidence the educational field is that every student is considered a subject of rights.

The *Ley General de Educación, Ley 115 de 1994*, refers to ethnoeducation in the chapter 3, defining it in the article 55 as:

*Se entiende por educación para grupos étnicos la que se ofrece a grupos o comunidades que integran la nacionalidad y que poseen una cultura, una lengua, unas tradiciones y unos fueros propios y autóctonos.*

In the article 56, it establishes its principles, and its goals by stating that:

*La educación en los grupos étnicos estará orientada por los principios y fines generales de la educación establecidos en la integralidad, interculturalidad, diversidad lingüística, participación comunitaria, flexibilidad y progresividad. Tendrá como finalidad afianzar los procesos de identidad, conocimiento, socialización, protección y uso adecuado de la naturaleza, sistemas y prácticas*

*comunitarias de organización, uso de las lenguas vernáculas, formación docente e investigación en todos los ámbitos de la cultura.*

In its article 57, this law guarantees the right to speak the mother tongue to the ethnic groups of linguistic tradition by establishing a bilingual education for these populations, which is ratified in the article 20 of the *Ley 1381 de 2010*. Hence, the *Ley 1381*, in its article 25 declares, the same as UNESCO, February 21<sup>st</sup> as the National Day of the Native Languages, and The International Day of the Mother Tongue, respectively. This attempts to highlight the values of the languages, and to foment their use through educational actions.

Castillo (2008) posits that ethnoeducation was first conceived as right by the indigenous movements of Colombia. However, it has been reduced to a service by policies such as: the *Ley 715* in its article 5.5 and in the *Ley 1381* in its article 20, which must respond to the national policies, and the administrative model of ethnoeducation service. These institutional requirements restrict the autonomy they have demanded for decades.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This research project is enclosed into a qualitative method, and it stated as a case study, whose data collection methods are the document analysis, the interviews, and the class observations. The target population is the group of first grade of *Institución Educativa El Yarumal*, where the dominant population belongs to Embera Bedea community. They are speakers of Embera and Spanish. For the analysis phase, grounded theory is used, and the data was codified and classified by identifying three categories *a priori*: Bilingualism, Interculturality, and IBE.

##### 4. 1 Type of research

Dornyei (2007) highlights that qualitative research embraces methods that have been useful for the social sciences, and the use of qualitative methods proliferate in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the sociological and anthropological studies. In the field of education, Briones (1998) presents qualitative research as a holistic approach that considers the object of study as a unity; for example, a classroom or a school could be conceived by the researcher as a unity. As this research project seeks to analyze the curriculum orientations in *Institución Educativa El Águila*, it is framed into a qualitative research study since its aim is to understand the sociocultural phenomenon, in this case, the curriculum without perturbing its nature as it is stated by Merriam (2009).

## **4.2 Type of study**

Briones (1998) posits that qualitative research is holistic as long as the object of study is seen as a unity, and he points out that most of the qualitative research studies are enclosed into case studies. According to Merriam (1998), a case study is a bounded system or a unity of analysis, so the nature of case study is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Most of case studies could be anthropological, sociological, psychological, and historical. Therefore, this research project is stated as a case study due to the fact that the Intercultural Bilingual Education is a sociological and anthropological construction, and the curriculum is also seen as a pedagogical and didactical development, so it also considers psychological and sociocultural factors.

## **4.3 Context**

To contextualize the origins, historical development, and current identification of Embera Chamíes, this and other familiar Embera communities will be target as “Embera”. Furthermore, Embera causes of their diaspora and contemporary ubication is built from the perspective of national and regional academic studies.

The Embera indigenous are pre-Hispanic ethnic groups that belonged, properly, to the littoral Pacific. For this reason, they were known as Chocó and later as Embera. Their diaspora began with the Spanish colonization by 1511. By that time, several foundations in the indigenous territory emerged provoking their diaspora; moreover, they started to be subjugated due to gold and copper exploitation. This situation replicates once more by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ulloa, 2004) where they

were set in San Juan del Chamí, Cordillera Occidental. Although the colonization was the major cause of their diaspora in the Colombian territory, yet political insurgencies since the 20<sup>th</sup> century dispersed, even more, these communities and, now, they are also found in the Amazon, Panama, and Ecuador (Mejía, 2007).

Considering Embera linguistic features, six languages are known: Catío, Septentorial, Baudó, Chamí, Saija and Tadó. Also, the Woun Meu, Anserma, Arma, and Runa were other linguistic communities belonging to the same Chocó lineage (Grimes, 2004), one of the eight regional and aboriginal linguistic families of Colombia (Landaburu, 2016). Analyzing in depth this information, Mejía (2007) comes to conclusion that the dead languages: Anserma, Arma and, Runa belonged to the indigenous communities ubicated in what, nowadays, is Risaralda and Caldas, so the vernacular languages of the current Embera communities might be dialects of these three languages.

#### 4.4 Setting

Embera are found, nowadays, mostly in Risaralda but also in Caldas and Antioquia. Based on DANE (2005), the 55,1% of the Embera population is found in Risaralda; in Caldas, it is found the 24,8% and in Antioquia the 7,3% of the population. Referring to the study conducted by Mejía (2007) and based on DANE (2003) the *Resguardos Embera* in Risaralda and Caldas are taxonomized, and recognized as: Embera Catío, Embera Chamí, Embera, which are the three biggest indigenous bilingual settlements in Caldas.

The community where this project will be attained is identified as Embera Bedea; this community is settled 7 kilometers from the toll booth *Acapulco* taking the route East to Belalcázar, Caldas in the *vereda* called *El Águila*, but also, there is another settlement that separated from the community of *El Totumal* due to population incensements, which is located 6 kilometers beyond of *El Totumal*. The educational institution where this research study will take place is *Institución Educativa El Yarumal*, whose main branch is located 1 kilometer beyond the indigenous settlement *El Totumal*. However, the branch in which students will be observed is ubicated into the *El Totumal* settlement.

#### 4.5 Participants

The *Institución Educativa El Yarumal*<sup>4</sup> has 380 students and the 64% of them are indigenous; nonetheless, in the branch of *El Totumal*, all the students are indigenous because is located into the settlement, where *Kajumas* (not indigenous people) cannot enter. The first grade has 25 indigenous students and the ethnoeducator, Víctor, who is the only Embera teacher with an academic degree, and two other teachers<sup>5</sup> are in charge of the same group. The six ethno-educators are bilingual in Embera Bedea and Spanish. In total, there are 6 ethno-educators in The *Institución Educativa El Águila*. Víctor studied *Licenciatura en Pedagogía Infantil* at Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a pseudonym to protect the name of the institution.

<sup>5</sup> The indigenous teachers who have a high school degree are called ethno-educators.

## 4.6 Researchers' role

As the data will be collected through the analysis of syllabi (documents), interviews, and class observation, the researchers will play three roles: (1) documents analyzer, (2), interviewer and (3) participant as observer.

### 4.6.1 Researchers as documents analyzers

According to Merriam (2009), documents are the third major source of data collection for qualitative research studies. Nonetheless, for this study, it constitutes the primary source of data since it provides relevant information regarding the curriculum orientations that are usually found in the educational institutional project (*proyecto educativo institucional-PEI*) to the researchers, and the syllabi (*planes de área*). Therefore, this researcher's role is determined by the ability to discover meaning, develop understanding, and explore insights (Merriam, 2009), for they are conceived as analyzer of documents as long as their main labor is to scrutinize what is behind the institutional documents in terms of intercultural bilingual education (IBE).

### 4.6.2 Researchers as interviewers

Dornyei (2007) points out that focusing on participants' meaning is crucial to make sense of what individuals think based on their experiences in the sociocultural setting where the research study is conducted. As a result, getting information from insiders contributes to build a wide spectrum of the phenomenon. That is why interview is the third source to collect data, and researchers will play the role of



interviewers. Grounded on Merriam's (2009) statements an interview is an intersubjective event in which the interviewer must elicit data that contributes to the study by asking good questions. For this reason, the interviewer must be perspicuous and avoid questions that do not provide information related to the research problem.

#### **4.6.3 Researchers as participant as observer**

As the second source of data collection is the class observation, the researchers will play the role of participants as observers. Merriam (2009) retakes Gold's (1958) typology to state that the participant as observer get involved in the setting to obtain information from the environment where the research problem takes place. The researchers' activities are known to the group to be observed; however, they must be partially committed to the group since their participation must be limited to get information from setting.

### **4.7 Data Collection Methods**

In order to analyze and identify the pedagogical and didactical approaches in the curriculum for Embera Bedea community in *El Totumal* and the needs they have in terms of bilingualism and interculturality, document analysis, class observations, and interviews will be used as instruments for data collections methods. In that sense, document analysis will be conducted to identify their current curriculum orientations; furthermore, for the curriculum needs regarding its contextualization with the target indigenous community, the researchers will observe classes to get information of the

educational interactions in the classroom. Finally, interviews will let the researchers to perceive other perspectives from the indigenous community.

#### **4.7.1 Document analysis**

Document analysis is defined by Bowen (2009) as a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” (p. 27), and it consists on skimming, examining and interpreting documents for content or thematic analysis. This research study considers a thematic analysis since Bowen (2009) conceives it as procedure to carefully read and understand the themes on the text to be related to the data previously collected. The documents that will be analyzed are: the PEI and syllabi of the subjects in first grade where the intercultural component can be found.

#### **4.7.2 Interviews**

Merriam (2009) defines interviews as, in a simple way, as a “person-to-person” conversation in which the interviewer elicits specific information, that the researcher cannot perceive just observing such as: feelings, worldview and behaviors, from the interviewee. In this case, the Embera teacher and the academic coordinator can provide their opinion and express their notions of education in consonance or inconsonance with the curriculum applied in the first grade of the school *Institución El Yarumal*.

Interviews are differentiated as highly structured, semi-structured and informal; Merriam (2009) considers semi-structured interviews are less structured and flexible.

Therefore, this is the type of interview that will be applied to both the first-grade teacher and the academic coordinator.

Since this research study seeks to analyze the curriculum orientations, the interview let the researchers to grasp information that will be found in the PEI and the syllabi in first grade, so part of the questions will emerge from those institutional documents, and the rest of the questions will be asked throughout the conversation with the teacher and the academic coordinator. The two interviews will be individual.

#### **4.7.3 Class observations**

Observations are systematic processes that respond to the main research question and allow the observer to watch the “phenomenon of interest” where it happens (Merriam, 2009). For this research study, four observations will be implemented in order to analyze the relations of the classroom interactions to what will be found in the institutional documents and the interviews regarding Intercultural Bilingual Education present in in the class as well as to corroborate the information for triangulation of data.

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) was initially developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss to strength the social science and to have their own research procedures. The objective of GTM is (1) to study interpersonal relations, actions of individuals in social settings, and human and social

practices, and (2) to use the empirical findings to develop hypothesis or middle-range theories.

This case study will use GTM as the method of data analysis since its aim is to approach to the understanding of a sociocultural praxis, in this case the education in the Embera Bedea community of Belalcázar, Caldas, to relate it to theory of IBE. Therefore, the researchers identified three *a priori* categories to condense the data that is related to the objectives of the research and the variables. The *a priori* categories that allowed the researchers to identify tendencies are bilingualism, interculturality, and IBE.

To conduct this analysis, the data collected (*PEI* and syllabi) was codified by using acronyms. Then, the researchers designed a matrix<sup>6</sup> where they put the codes of each document in a box to include the data that was also codified in its respective section. Each datum includes the acronym of the *a priori* categories at the end of the code.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 3 to find the matrix and the metacodes.

## **5. FINDINGS**

In this section, the findings are categorized from the reading of PEI, and the syllabi of the subjects of Cátedra Embera, Mother Tongue, Spanish, and Mathematics. Also, interviews to the ethnoeducator, who is in charge of first grade, and the academic coordinator were analyzed along with the class observations of syllabi previously mentioned.

### **5.1 Bilingualism: Institutional tensions for the roles of L1 and L2**

Bilingualism, into the institution, has a discrepancy of relevance for the language learning in which Spanish might be dominant because of the integration of the Embera community to the major society, or Embera due to its immediate and local importance.

The curriculum reflects how the actors who participate in its process conceive the world, the contexts, and the life, to set educational praxis. From the documents (PEI and syllabi), the mother tongue has a vital role for the conservation and maintenance of the Embera culture: this was ratified by the academic coordinator. However, in the interviews conducted, she emphasized the dominant role of Spanish for the area of languages, which is integrated by the teachers in charge of Embera, Spanish, and English. They have established that Spanish has 70 % of the assessment of the languages area.

Nonetheless, Embera persists as dominant language for the interaction in the classroom to propitiate learning situations. Throughout the classes, the ethnoeducator constantly interacted with the students and explained the content in the Embera language; however, he switched to Spanish only to call the attention or to make questions regarding the activities.

In the following data selected, the relevance of L1 is presented from the justification of the **syllabus of mother tongue**, and the aspects highlighted by the academic coordinator in the interview. Moreover, the real scenario of the use of L1 and L2 is evidenced in the class observations. This data reveals that: although Spanish is the dominant language institutionally, in the teaching environment the mother tongue prevails.

**PALM1-Pag2-P1-L1-L3-Just;Bil**

*La Lengua Materna de los ěběra es un elemento esencial para el desarrollo en la vida del ser humano, como el habla, la escritura, pensamiento, inteligencia y creatividad, a partir de las capacidades de cada individuo.*

**PALM2-Pag1-PD2-U4-Log-L1-L3;IBE**

*Leer y escribir textos sencillos utilizando las vocales vistas en la lengua materna.*

These previous excerpts evidence how the **syllabus of mother tongue** assumes the literacy process and the vital role of the L1 in the transmission and maintenance of

the culture: this emphasizing the development of reading and writing skills and the construction of thinking by recognizing their speaking abilities.

In contrast to the previous excerpts, in this fragment taken from the **to the academic coordinator**, she presents the relevance of each of the languages in the assessment.

**I-Acoor-Pag1-P2-L3-L11 IBE**

*Entonces, para eso también, tenemos que tener...tenemos que saber que a la población embera se le ofrece...se le ofrecen espacios donde haya fortalecimiento de su propia lengua y fortalecimiento de todas sus...de todo los que es cultural, de los arraigos de ellos. ¿En qué espacios? Nosotros tenemos, desde el plan de estudios, de los planes de estudios, de la estructura académica, tenemos el área de lenguas, lenguaje, dividido en tres asignaturas, que son, entonces, el español, que para nosotros sí tiene, pues, un porcentaje superior: en este caso el español son...son un 70 % de la nota en ese hacemos énfasis. Eh, al inglés se le da un 20 % y al embera bedea se le da un 10 %.*

This demonstrates that while Spanish and English have a percentage of 70% and 20%, respectively, Embera only has 10 % of relevance in the assessment of the area of languages.

**CO1-Lu-2.1- L1-L4-Bil**

*Most of the time, the teacher spoke in Embera, and he communicated with the students in Embera when grading their activities and monitoring.*

Different from what is presented in the curriculum, this fragment exposes the contrast between Spanish, which is established as the most relevant language. However, into the classroom environment the target language is the mother tongue most of the time. The use of Spanish is relegated to call the attention or to refer to something very specific at the moment of grading the notebooks.

In his case study, Vivero-Márquez (2016) found: although the community of *La Colonia Primero de Enero de 1994* is trilingual, teachers tended to use more Spanish in the classroom due to its prestige. In this case, the ethnoeducator, of the Embera students, uses L1 for teaching the content while L2 is used for some references or calling attention. In both cases, the teachers are the ones who create learning scenarios for different subjects by using their mother tongue.

The development of the bilingual competence, which Spolsky (1998) proposes, is determined by the sociolinguistic function of the languages in the classroom; as the data reveals: Embera is used to create learning situations, whereas Spanish is spoken in casual conversation or to call the students' attention. Although the learners have linguistic abilities in both languages, the bilingual usage (Baker, 2001) encourages them to develop CALP (Cummins, 1986) in L1. Therefore, L2 is limited for BICS in first grade.

## **5.2 Bilingualism: learning to read and write from the structure**



The literacy process in L1 and L2 is oriented by using the syllabic method, which consists on learning the vowels and the consonants to form syllables, and, then, words: the languages are learned from the structure and not from the functions.

Becoming bilingual means the development of two linguistic codes that are used functionally in different domains (personal, public, academic, and occupational); not always a bilingual uses the two languages in the same domains. Although the structure is undoubtedly necessary to speak a language, the structure without functions and contexts loses its main purpose that is communication. In that sense, the development of the bilingual competence should be both structural (the recognition of a speech system) and communicative (the speakers' performance).

In the syllabi of *Cátedra Embera* the content is organized by linguistic structures that the students of first grade must learn to approach to the reading and writing processes. Despite the fact there is a literary component, which is writing Embera stories by using the vowels, all the learning is focalized on learning the structures systematically. Thus, other cognitive functions such as decoding, comprehending, getting the meaning of a word according to context, and so on are not explicit in the curriculum. The interview to the teacher and the class observations evidence that the focus is generally structural.

In the following data selected, the syllabi and the content from the class observations demonstrate the emphasis on the structural aspects of the language in Embera and Spanish, and the focus of the Embera subject on the learning of the vowels to enable students to write the mother tongue. It evidences the syllabic

method used in the classes and proposed from the curriculum, omitting the functional aspects of the language learning process.

Based on the **syllabus of mother tongue**, their main learning objectives are:

**PALM2-Pag1-PD2-U4-Log-L1-L3;IBE**

*Leer y escribir textos sencillos utilizando las vocales vistas en la lengua materna*

**PALM2-Pag2-PD3-U8-IL-G2-L1-L3;Inter**

*Comprende que las vocales es lo primordial en la vida puesto que con ella da el sonido de la consonante*

The fragments exposed before indicate the emphasis of the curriculum on the structural aspects of the Embera language, and how the syllabic method becomes the way of approaching to the literacy in L1.

The **class observation** reports present the following information:

**CO1-LO1-L2-L3- Bil**

*-To form syllables with the /n/ consonant and its combination with the vowels*

**CO1-AC-InTop-L1-l6-Bil**

*The teacher wrote on the board the combinations of the n consonant with the vowels:*

*na-ne-ni-no-nu*

*Then, he asked them to complete the sheet repeating the same combination.*

The two previous excerpts also demonstrate that for learning the second language the syllabic method takes relevance as in the case of L1, and everything focuses on the structural features of L2.

This fragment taken from the **interview** to the ethnoeducator shows how he teaches Spanish:

**I-Ethnoed-Pag6-P1-L5-L7-Bil**

*Por ejemplo, en el plan anual, para este segundo periodo, estamos viendo con 7 consonantes. Ahí sí el maestro tiene que hablarle en español. Y luego lo explica en lengua materna.*

Although class observations do not evidence a planned use of L2 for the Spanish class, the ethnoeducator corroborates in the interview the importance of using L2 to teach its content and its reinforcement in the mother tongue.

Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) stated that the problem of the communities in Mexico was the reduction of IBE to the translation and insignificant use of the vernacular language. By contrast, BE in first grade in *Institución Educativa El Yarumal* is focalized on the structure of the language, so there is no a profound instruction in the two codes that integrates the language and the content as Cummins (2008) posits.

García (2009) points out that if BE does not allow the cross of the language and the content, there is, in fact, a foreign/second language instruction. Therefore, BE must focus on one type of bilingualism so that the bilingual competence (Spolsky, 1998) leads the students to accomplish actions by creating new cognitive schemata to

make the transit from BICS to CALP where the two languages are in contact (Cummins, 1986). This type of bilingualism is characterized by the functional use of the languages and the conception that L1 and L2 do not operate as separate systems; on the contrary, there is a cognitive bridge among them.

### **5.3 The sense of interculturality and IBE in the curriculum**

Interculturality has been partially understood from PEI while from the open curriculum and the educational praxis, it has been acknowledged, but not potentialized.

Throughout the curriculum, the intention of revitalizing the Embera culture at school is evident due to its acculturation, so interculturality emerges when students, both indigenous and the rest of the multiracial students, gather to share and to express their practices. Nevertheless, in the curriculum (PEI) ethnoeducation and interculturality is slightly acknowledged and reduced to general conceptions in one paragraph of the document.

Interculturality is not intended in the formal construction of the syllabi, whereas it emerges in the teaching environment when the teacher takes advantage of some previous knowledge in L2 to widen the schemata in L1. Also, the content of the curriculum is transversalized to the Embera subject privileging the L1; furthermore, the ethnoeducator, in the interviews, considers the knowledge, values and consciousness of the community when teaching at school, inside and outside classroom.

In the following data selected, the institution acknowledges from the **PEI** the diversity of the population and the ethnoeducation as the approach for the institution:

***PEI-C1-Pag8-P2-L6-L9:IBE***

*De ahí que la Institución Educativa el Águila entienda el proceso etnoeducativo como un proceso social, permanente, reflexivo y de construcción colectiva, mediante el cual la población indígena Embera Chamí perteneciente al resguardo el Totumal, asentado en el municipio de Belalcázar, fortalecen su autonomía en el marco de la interculturalidad y la cosmovisión; a partir del conocimiento, análisis y valoración de su identidad étnica, posibilitando la interiorización y producción de valores, ideas y, el desarrollo de habilidades y destrezas conforme a su realidad cultural, expresada en su proyecto global de vida.*

This paragraph taken from the PEI states interculturality from its cultural and linguistic dimensions. Nonetheless, this concept from a critical perspective involves a political dimension that is transversal to all the expressions of interculturality.

The **interviews of the academic coordinator and the ethnoeducator** advocate the meaningful relationships of all the students (indigenous and non-indigenous) when achieving cultural activities.

***I-Acoor-Pag3-P3-L10-L17-Inter***

*Eh, acá, entonces, se hacen las, se llaman las actividades de conjunto, que es una formación que se hace cada 15 días y ahí le hemos pedido al*

*profesor indígena que tenemos acá en secundaria que siempre que vamos a iniciar una actividad de conjunto, o cuando vamos a hacer una izada de bandera, o cuando vamos a hacer una reunión, es iniciar todas las reuniones, así como uno hace la oración normalmente, pues, en nuestra cultura, que se empieza con una oración o una reflexión, ellos tienen, entonces, lo que llama la armonización, que es un acto propio de ellos. Entonces, nosotros las actividades culturales las iniciamos con una armonización, en respeto a las creencias de ellos.*

The previous answer given by the academic coordinator in the interview confirms that interculturality emerges at school throughout cultural events because of (1) the intention of the indigenous students to recuperate lost traditions from their antecessors, and (2) all of the school, including Kajumas and teachers participate respectfully in the activities.

**The class** of the ethnoeducator allows **to observe** how the interculturality emerges into the classroom, but it is not consciously planned in the curriculum. These conceptions, activities and syllabi evidence that interculturality is present in the institution; nonetheless, it is reduced to the cultural, and it must transcend to other dimensions such as: the political, economic, ethical and epistemic.

**CO2-DevTop-L4-L17-Bil**

*He asks how to say number 1 in Embera. All of the students answer “uno”. The teacher says: “No, eso es en español, en Embera”. Some students keep saying “Uno, dos, tres”. When he clarifies, they say “Aba”.*

*Then he asks for the number 2 and some children answer “Umbea”, but then he says: “No, ese es tres”. Una niña responde: “Ome” and the teacher congratulates her.*

*Later, he asks for the number 4, but nobody answers. He helps them with the first syllable : “Ki”, y de nuevo a niña responde “Kimare”. Teacher writes on the board the rest of the numbers.*

The students’ linguistic practices reveal how they interact in both languages, Spanish and Embera: the fact that they have a higher knowledge of the numbers in Spanish in contrast to Embera, demonstrates that they use them in daily conversations. Therefore, interculturality emerges here as an opportunity to mediate the knowledge in the two languages. This knowledge evidences different ways of representing the worlds.

**I-Ethnoed-Pag9-P2-L3-L9-IBE**

*Por ejemplo, yo cojo a mis chicos, cuando yo veo que los niños ya están pasando ya sobre, o sea cuando ya los niños no se me muestran más concentración en mi clase, yo paro, yo paro lo que yo estaba dando en la lengua materna, yo paro y hago una actividad. Yo me siento con ellos y*

*les empiezo a hablar. Un cuento pero que se relacione con la actividad que estaban haciendo ellos. O sea, la concentración, le hablo desde la lengua materna. Y ahí es donde yo adquiero la concentración, y usted como maestro usted tiene que buscar que los niños ... eh... pongan más atención.*

In this excerpt taken from the interview to the teacher, he recognizes the importance of using the mother tongue in the classroom to promote an intercultural experience from rescuing the Embera narratives that are lost in this context of acculturation. Thus, the interculturality emerges as possibility to approach to their ancestral knowledge.

Ito (2012) conducted a research study in which some participants considered a slight advanced on the understanding of BE; in that sense, they could not go forwards in their educational projects. Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) explain from their case study that: although Mexico has worked too much on IBE, it is reduced to the translation of the vernacular language. Similarly, in the *Institución Educativa el Yarumal*, the Embera practices such as: language, dances, myths, rituals etc... are recognized, but IBE cannot be minimalized to cultural or linguistic aspects, which are relevant, but not coherent holistically. IBE aims at comprehending the ethnic complexity in Latin America (Ospina 2013a, 2013b)), and build from these diversity: political, social, economic (Walsh, 2009; Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos, 2014) and epistemic (Hernández 2005; Piñacué, 2014; Quintar, 2018) projects that the curriculum must promote.



IBE cannot become a project to exclude themselves. The curriculum for these indigenous communities needs to find a balance between the western and the local society and culture along with their knowledge, consciousness and values (López and Küper, 1999); interacting and coexisting to discover those new realities, the otherness and knowledge; having in mind a critical perspective as proposed by Hernández (2005) and Walsh (2009). In the Embera context, the ethnoeducator affirms to promote some knowledge, values and consciousness as extra activities into the classroom using myths to obtain students concentration, but in the development of the classes the content was not mediated with their narratives.

As Viveros-Márquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) prevent, IE needs to be pondered into the curriculum so that it corresponds to the contexts, being autonomous and contextualized, or it would not succeed. It can be drawn from this that ethnoeducation cannot be conceived as a process that must be attended by the institution; on the contrary, it is a project of the whole community that must emancipate them from social, economic, epistemic and ethnic perspectives from which emerges new “*condiciones de ser, estar, pensar, conocer, aprender, sentir y vivir distintas*” (Walsh, 2009), new identifications from local and global viewpoints (Cusicanqui, 2015; Londoño, 2016).

The autonomy for an own education that responds to their social, economic, cultural, epistemic and ethnic conditions is what ethnoeducation has pretended in Colombia since it was claimed by indigenous communities, and it is precisely what the Embera community has to request nowadays when the educational system in

Colombia is being homogenized, and they have to deal with the curricular tensions of assessing with most of the percentage in Spanish (70%) even when the classes are accomplished in L1, which has only the 10 % in the area of languages. What was mentioned before indicates the relevance of contextualizing the curriculum considering the situation of bilingualism, Spanish as the subordinated language in the classroom and Embera as the language of learning.

The Embera language as the vehicle of the learning process in the first years of school agrees with what Mondiano (1974), Steward (1983), and Rockwell (1988), cited by López (1997) state: there are positive consequences of learning in the mother tongue, which favors the development of competences on reading, writing and logical thinking. This supports the fact that bilingualism must re-thought and re-signified institutionally so that the assessment is coherent with the L1 and L2 roles. Also, each language provides different knowledge to the students, and it requires an intended management from the ethnoeducator for the classes.

The curriculum for this community must understand Embera's historical memories to understand their reality so that it allows to stablish clear educational and democratic horizons inasmuch as the curriculum forms students as historical subjects that ponder themselves and whose worldviews co-exist with the outside world (Sánchez, 2001; Ospina, 2013b; Quintar, 2018).

#### 5.4 IBE: territory, curriculum, and policies

The institution recognizes the students' right to their mother tongue, and the relevance of revitalizing and promoting their culture: this, considering the vast educational policies, especially, *Ley 115* that establishes the principles and goals of ethnoeducation, which consist on supporting the community process, on promoting an adequate use of the nature, and on fomenting the use of the vernacular languages.

The goals of the PEI, which is the document that orients the actions in the institution, consider the educational community's expectations, so diversity becomes a factor that advocates for the inclusion of the community's proper practices. Therefore, assuming bilingualism as a reality of the population requires to take advantage of their linguistic tradition to bring to the classroom their knowledge.

The recognition of the community's traditions and practices at school evidences that the curriculum attempts to go from the characteristics of the territory to the national policies so that the demands of the Ministry of Education could be satisfied without ignoring the local context. This is also a way of making the mother tongue functional since its vitality is determined by the actions that could be achieved with it.

However, the documents (syllabi, and PEI), the interviews, and the class observations let see the institutional tension that exists for the role of L1 and L2. The assessment of the area of languages demonstrates that Embera has the least percentage in contrast to Spanish and English while in the classroom most of the interaction occurs in L1. Even when *Ley 115* in its article 57 determines a bilingual

education for ethnic groups of linguistic tradition, *Cátedra Embera* has only one hour of class per week, and this is the class in which they learn to read and write in L1.

The syllabi do not transversalize the language and the content, yet the teacher of first grade gives all the classes in Embera: this causes that the institution does not reach to an IBE approach since Ministry of Education demands to the school to work on *Estándares Básicos de Competencia* in the fundamental areas. Therefore, all the syllabi are planned according to the guidelines and the standards provided by MEN, so the possibilities to mediate the content is limited due to the fact that ICFES measures what the institutions achieve. Thus, despite the fact that MEN seeks educational quality by standardizing the competences, this is not actually aligned to what *Ley 115* prioritizes for ethnoeducation inasmuch as it must dialogue with the standard canon of knowledge and the ancestral knowledge.

In the following data selected, the institution in the **PEI** recognizes the diversity of the school and how it is conceived from different educational strategies.

**PEI-C1-Pag8-P1-L2-L11:IBE- Bil**

*(...)dichas metas nacen en la comunidad educativa, donde también se tiene en cuenta, el factor de la diversidad y es allí donde empiezan a asumirse como propias, lo que hace que cada persona que conforma dicha comunidad desde su cultura étnica, población indígena y población mestiza, tengan la responsabilidad de poner en marcha todo su quehacer o acciones encaminadas al desarrollo estratégico de la institución como unidad educativa; exigiendo de cada uno el compromiso de participar*

*activamente en planes, programas, proyectos y actividades; dándole respuesta a uno de los objetivos generales formulados “planear acciones y estrategias educativas que conduzca al conocimiento agrícola, racional, social, histórico, cultural, científico y tecnológico a través del fomento de la educación”*

Throughout the PEI the projects and processes fomented from the institution in order to recognize the diversity of the educational community is justified in this excerpt, giving importance to the *savoirs faire* in the learning processes.

In the following **interviews**, the academic coordinator and the ethnoeducator present their positions of how bilingualism is conceived and accomplished at school. Although students are recognized as subjects of rights and an appropriate education, the institution is not to the vanguard of the national policies.

**I-Acoor-Pag1-P1-L1-L2-Bil**

*El bilingüismo en la institución, para nosotros, es una realidad. Sabemos que su lengua madre es el embera bedea, pero también sabemos que los debemos preparar para su inmersión a una sociedad que les habla en español todo el tiempo. Entonces, lo que procuramos es perpetuar y fortalecer su lengua madre, pero tratar de... (alguien interrumpe), pero a la vez, entonces, tratar de alfabetizarlos en español, en el castellano, para que ellos pueden tener una... llevar una vida normal. Y hacer su inmersión en sociedad en todo lo que se refiere, pues, a relaciones, a la parte laboral de una manera armónica.*

Contradicting the *Ley 115* and the previous excerpt of the PEI, the conception of the coordinator prioritizes the western knowledge over the Embera since it is supposed to be required for students to assure their integration to the society.

**I-Ethnoed-Pag4-P2-L2-L18-Inter**

*Por ejemplo, en estos días pasó que en el resguardo se aporreó un niños, entonces no había como llevarlo al hospital. Estaba... se ensangró acá. Entonces ahí mismo cogió y corrió. Haaa profe, está sangrando mucho. ¿Qué hizo el niño? fue y corrió una rama de café y la mascó y la colocó. Con eso tuvo para que el niño estancara, el sangrado que estaba haciendo. O sea que ellos ya tienen ese conocimiento ya. Que qué planta le sirve, qué planta le cura. Entonces él vio que el compañerito estaba llorando, le estaba saliendo sangre, entonces profe (ininteligible) fue y consiguió una hoja de café, que es la hoja fresquita, la hoja viche y entonces lo cogió, lo mascó y le colocó acá en la frente donde estaba el sangrado. Y con eso tuvo que el niño no sangrara de una lo estancó, de una. Y el niño al ratico ya era normal, ya. Entonces eso me parece que es muy importante desde niño que uno ve vaya enseñando cómo la planta medicinal tiene su curación, que no a toda hora puede ir uno... es muy bueno llevar al hospital, pero si no hay medios de transporte, si no hay cómo llevarlo, entonces desde la naturaleza brinda nuestra propia medicina. Y eso mucho, mucho no lo saben. No saben que el mismo naturaleza nos brinda esa medicina, no lo sabemos. Entonces si ve, entonces es como enseñar todo eso, enseñar a los niños más pequeños...*

Even though there is a contradiction between what is established in the curriculum and the academic coordinator's perception, the ethnoeducator reaffirms, in the interview, the necessity of this community of keeping and reinforcing the cultural knowledge and worldview into the classrooms to respond to the social context of the community.

Ito (2012) and Viveros-Marquez and Moreno-Olivos (2014) from their respective contexts, Paraguay and Mexico, concluded that the limitations for IBE are the standardization of education and the lack of articulation in the national educational policies. Similarly, this study identifies that the administration of the school tries to respond to the demands of the Ministry of Education and includes, in spite of the difficulties, aspects concerning to the Embera culture, but it does not transcend to the perspective of a critical curriculum as Quintar (2018), Londoño (2016), and Rivera (2018) proposed, which emphasize the political dimension that is linked to the curriculum and integrates to the learning process the history, the cultural memories, and the ethics as elements that are determining in the process of identification of individuals.

Castillo (2008) makes a review of the trajectory of ethnoeducation in Colombia, and she starts by explaining that it emerges from the indigenous movements when struggling for the autonomy of their educational process. The Political Constitution of 1991, and *Ley 115 de 1994* gives to the ethnic groups that autonomy they were demanding. In that sense, this fact constituted, in that moment, a conquest for them.

Nonetheless, policies such as *Ley 715* and *Ley 1381* reaffirms the government demands of responding to the standardization of education and to the administrative model of ethnoeducation service. Save the Children (2016) found that the lack of pertinence of indigenous education in Colombia relies on the necessity of a flexible curriculum. Likewise, Viveros-Marquez (2016) alerted that in the Mexican context, the educational praxis is affected by the governmental policies that oversee and control the education without considering other curriculum standards according to the territories.



## 6. PEDAGOGICAL AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research project might serve as a reference for teachers and investigators who are interested in IBE. The theory presented is contextualized in the Latin America contexts considering the globalization and the cultural diversity as factors that are affecting the educational praxis.

Enrique Dussel, who has been one of the main representatives of the philosophy of liberation in Latin America, has questioned in his career the sense of thinking in our continent. In a recent lecture the philosopher gave in Mexico<sup>7</sup>, he expressed his disagreement with the idea of educational reforms, which have been unsuccessful in this part of the continent. On the contrary, he proposes a decolonization of the education since the system has operated on epistemic structures of power with a Eurocentric vision of the world and the *savoirs*.

Grounded on this idea, the projects that emerge in this line of IBE from a decolonialist perspective should contribute to continue to answer the question of *what is the sense of the thinking the education in Latin America in the light of cultural diversity and globalization?* This question was conceived as part of this Latin American project, whose aim is questioning those structures of power that causes racism that, in this case, are thought in the educational and epistemic levels.

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<sup>7</sup> Link of the lecture taken from Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/100013313070286/videos/548690105584754/UzpfSTEwMDAwMjY4Nzk1MzM0MzoxNTg5MTMxNjQxMTg2NDE5/>

For teachers, this research study constitutes a point to reflect on the pedagogical practicum regarding how the curriculum orientations are taking into account the diversity and the needs of the territories. For that reason, we reflect on the curriculum implications, and we highlight the relevance of critical curriculum that is dialogical as the one proposed by Küper and López (1999), since the knowledge, the consciousness, and the values of the cultures in contact are part of the learning process.

Every educational act is a political act, so the curriculum in a continent as our *América Mestiza* (Ospina, 2013a) should prioritize the formation of political subjects, whose leadership encourages to the transformation of the realities of the communities where the teaching practices take place. Therefore, teachers' awareness in the interculturality and the bilingualism can contribute (1) to promote equality in terms of opportunities for learning so that the educational community projects their needs and expectations, and (2) to mediate the content by dialoguing with the different worldviews that are present in the classroom.

## 7. LIMITATIONS

This section aims at exposing the main limitations throughout this research project. Those restrictions regarding the development of this research were: (1) The basis for this research proposal were grounded on intuitions due to the lack of experience of the academic program concerning the Intercultural Bilingual Education; (2) The access to first hand theory in order to know the state and advances of ethnoeducation in Colombia; (3) The access to the community *El Totumal* to accomplish the observations along with the communication with the ethnoeducator.

The lack of knowledge and experience regarding the ethnoeducation in the academic program is due to its transition from one pensum to another, which allows other research horizons such as: the bilingualism from non hegemonic perspectives. In that sense, this research project start is a legacy for further research questions in the Intercultural Bilingual Education.

To propose the target research project, there were constraints in terms of content and knowledge about the ethnoeducation in Colombia. Even though the advisor was all the time supporting the process, other professors' perspectives of the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira that have worked with indigenous and ethnoeducation in Colombia were meaningful to establish the focus in this research.

When stating the problem and structuring the literature review for the project, the absence of systematic and profound studies analyzing, exploring or evaluating the ethnoeducation were evidenced. Only one solid research was found and provided by

the advisor in order to acknowledge what has been the achievements in ethnoeducation. This evidences that ethnoeducation and bilingualism has been relegated, and it is not the focus of attention from education.

Finally, there were several limitations to access the ubicated in the community *El Totumal* since it was not possible to access without the governor's permission. By those days, the Embera community was changing the governor, so the observations were postponed for weeks until the new governor was assigned. Also, there is only one transport media and it passes by the community twice per day transporting the students for the school. Moreover, it was difficult to establish communication with the ethnoeducator and many times the observations were postponed.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This research project emerged from the necessity of studying bilingualism and interculturality and their relationship with the educational field. Our main purpose was to analyze this phenomenon from non-hegemonic points of view. Therefore, the dialogue between the theory and the findings considered the plurality of Latin America. This project was enclosed into case study proposal because we, as researchers, identified when stating the problem that the literature regarding IBE in the AMCO was limited, so our points of references were not sufficient to apply action research; we wanted to know the context first.

From the findings we have presented in the fifth chapter, we can conclude by pointing out that:

The recognition of the territories and the ethnic cultures also implies to link the vernacular languages, as speech systems, in the educational proposals that accepts their practices as valid. For that reason, the students are conceived as subjects of rights, whose identities must be protected by the state. For that reason, bilingualism in ethnic contexts must be considered as a right that allows them to access to one of the fundamental rights that is education. Thus, this constitutes the right of literacy of feeling, interpreting, reading, and writing the world and the realities.

In this sense, the instruction in the two languages must be functional: their life is in the daily interaction, so the living of the culture is the element that makes its symbolic and historical baggage tangible. The institution where this project was

developed accept the community's right to preserve the language. However, they are still on the work of establishing a functional bilingualism that intersects the different communicative domains (personal, public, academic and occupational).

Transcending from a structural perspective of bilingualism to a functional perspective could be the first step to approach interculturality since the languages are immersed in the culture, in the interaction, and in the daily life.

However, the interculturality could not be reduced to a linguistic behavior of a speech community. On the contrary, this must emerge as a political, social, economic, ethical, and epistemic response to the structures of power that subordinates some communities by its stratification, its races, and varied cultural expressions. Thus, this response must be present in all the relationships where diversity exists.

Education is also a platform that impulses communities. In the learning scenarios, the interculturality must be promoted with an emphasis on the leadership so that the social actors have the power of taking actions in their immediate contexts to reduce inequalities by struggling for the autonomy in their territories. Therefore, this must start from the processes of identification (self-recognition and the recognition of their context) in which the memory, the history, and the worldviews play a determinant role since this is the point where empowerment emerges; there is no autonomy without a historical and social awareness.

The curriculum has a political dimension that (1) affirms sometimes the intentions of the neoliberal state or (2) that assumes a critical perspective that

questions the social realities that are framed into inequalities to focalize the educational praxis on these purposes. The second purpose of educating for emancipation and equal opportunities results in confrontations with the governmental entities that advocate for an educational system that measures its achievements by standards.

The loss of institutional autonomy is the result of the educational national policies that sometimes oppose to what the indigenous communities fought for decades in Latin America. There is a contradiction between the rights they conquered in the Political Constitution of 1991 and the laws that restrict the teaching practices and the curriculum orientations. This causes that the educational communities hardly approach to an IBE that consider the plurality of the territories due to the fact that the state thinks of one educational proposal for the whole country that is characterized by its cultural diversity. Therefore, the accomplishments of the IBE in Colombia are the result of the institutional tensions since these imply to be out of the canon established.

## **9. APPENDIXES**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1p8wbpElgnpujBHpuMZRXoXR4rseEREwv?  
usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1p8wbpElgnpujBHpuMZRXoXR4rseEREwv?usp=sharing)



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